GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6311
ANSWERED ON:12.04.2017
Women in Media
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Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the media is portraying women indecently;
(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
(c) the action taken by the Government on such motivated propaganda against women; and
(d) the steps taken by the Government to safeguard the safety/modesty of women?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING [COL RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE (Retd.)]

(a) to (d): All programmes and advertisements telecast on private satellite TV channels and transmitted/re-transmitted through the Cable TV network are regulated under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 framed thereunder. The Act does not provide for pre-censorship of any programme and advertisement telecast on such TV channels. However, it prescribes that all programmes and advertisements telecast on such TV channels should be in conformity with the prescribed Programme Code and Advertising Code enshrined in the said Act and the rules framed thereunder, which contain a whole range of parameters to regulate programmes and advertisements including content regarding portrayal of women in various Programme and Advertsement on TV channels.

Rule 6(1)(k) of Programme Code specifically provides 'No programme should be carried in the cable service which denigrates women through the depiction in any manner of the figure of a women, her form or body or any part thereof in such a way as to have the effect of being indecent, or derogatory to women, or is likely to deprave, corrupt or injure the public morality or morals.'

Rule 6(2) of Programme Code provides that the cable operator should strive to carry programmes in his cable service which project women in a positive, leadership role of sobriety, moral and character building qualities.

Rule 7(2)(vi) of Advertising Code provides that 'No advertisement shall be permitted which in its depiction of women violates the Constitutional guarantees to all citizens. In particular, no advertisement shall be permitted which projects a derogatory image of women. Women must not be portrayed in a manner that emphasizes passive, submissive qualities and encourages them to play a subordinate, secondary role in the family and society. The cable operator shall ensure that the portrayal of the female form, in the programmes carried in his cable service is tasteful and aesthetic, and is within the well established norms of good taste and decency.'

Action is taken whenever any violation of Programme and Advertising Codes is brought to the notice of the Ministry. Details of action taken on violation of Programme and Advertising Codes by private TV channels for telecast of content of indecency/obscenity/vulgarity in TV programmes and Advertisements in the last three years and the current year are enclosed at Annexure.

An Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) has been set up in the Ministry to look into the specific complaints or suo-motu take cognizance of violation of Programme and Advertising Codes. The IMC has representatives from the Ministries of Home Affairs, Defence, External Affairs, Law, Women and Child Development, Health & Family Welfare, Consumer Affairs, Information & Broadcasting and a representative from the industry in Advertising Standards Authority of India (ASCI). Apart from this, the Ministry has also issued directions to States to set up District level and State level Monitoring Committees to regulate content telecast on cable TV channels.

Government encourages self-regulation in broadcasting industry. The following are the self-regulatory mechanisms established by industry bodies which, inter-alia, deal with the complaints relating to portrayal of women in programmes and advertisements on TV channels:

(i) News Broadcasters Association (NBA) − a representative body of news and current affairs TV channels has set up News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA), headed by retired Supreme Court / High Court judge, to consider complaints against or in respect of broadcasters relating to content of any news and current affairs telecast on TV channels.
(ii) Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF), which is a representative body of non-news & current affairs TV channels, has set up Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC) headed by retired Supreme Court / High Court judge to examine the complaints relating to content of television programmes.
(iii) Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), established in 1985, has set up Consumer Complaints Council (CCC) to consider complaints in respect of advertisements.

The existing provisions contained in the Programme & Advertising Codes and the existing mechanism are considered adequate to

regulate content of private satellite TV channels including safeguarding the positive portrayal of women.
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